

Tradition Transformed

Contemporary Korean Ceramics



Guac, Roh Hoon, *Form-Series II*, 2003



Lim, Moo Keun, *Do Not Fear*, 2006



Kang, Suk Young, *Untitled*, 2004

Tradition Transformed: Contemporary Korean Ceramics is a compelling exhibition that brings the finest of contemporary Korean ceramics to the countries of Europe. The exhibition is meant to convey the unique elegance and originality of Korean art.

This enchanting exhibition will take you on a journey from the past into the present recalling the history and beauty of the rolling hills and pastoral countryside of Korea, while geometric shapes, bold color and fresh designs dance on the ceramic works expressing the inventive and modern spirit of the Korean people.

Tradition Transformed assembles 29 contemporary Korean ceramic artists whose pieces incorporate traditional techniques with new influences and innovative methods to create sculptural works. There are 87 works in the exhibition, both

large- and small-scale, dating from 1998 through 2006, with many created especially for the tour. Despite the differences in artistic approaches, the works reveal the adventurous spirit of Korea's ceramic tradition, 5,000 years after it began.

Melding traditional techniques with contemporary influences, each piece in the exhibition expresses the vitality and ingenuity of the Korean people. The artists in the exhibition range in age from mid-30s to mid-60s and come from many regions and schools, providing works that spotlight the distinct trends in contemporary Korean ceramics. They are internationally celebrated ceramists and many artists have work featured in major museum collections around the world, such as the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC; the Victoria and Albert Museum in London; and the Seoul Metropolitan Museum of Art in Korea.

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Kim, Hyun Sik, *Life III*, 2006



Kwon, Shin, *Bird's Nest*, 2000



Kim, Eun Me, *Flat Jars*, 2006

A Brief History of Contemporary Korean Ceramics

The development of Korean art and craft was severely hindered in the early 20th century by continuous invasions and wars. By the time Korea gained its independence from Japan in 1945 as a result of World War II, much of the country's cultural identity was in disrepair. Some have referred to these years as the "state of unconsciousness," a period in which a great deal of amateur work was produced. Even though these works were not as accomplished as those that would succeed them, these works helped spark a revival in Korean craft giving birth to an innovative form of contemporary ceramics.

In 1958 ceramic art was first acknowledged as a subject in Korean universities. At this time, contemporary Korean ceramicists began to create ties with their American counterparts. Many Korean artists received scholarships to study in the United States and elsewhere, allowing them the opportunity to influence and be influenced by artists from other cultures. As a result, Korean artists acquired new skills that were valuable for the preservation and maintenance of the Korean ceramic tradition. These developments helped start the contemporary movement in Korean ceramics in the 1960s.

The 1970s saw a significant increase in the production of Korean ceramics. Artists began to put their new skills to work as the field became increasingly profitable for them. Many different groups and associations were founded to develop contemporary Korean ceramics. In addition, the Korean government instituted a policy to increase the number of students in all areas of university study. Art departments were established in most of Korea's universities, and design subjects grew in popularity. Universities with sufficient financial backing began to install kilns and firing systems, providing the students with an opportunity to control their own firing and glaze making. Today, universities continue to support ceramics education and much of the development in contemporary ceramics has come about as a result of this partnership.

Contemporary Korean ceramicists continue to struggle with maintaining the positive growth of their craft while preserving the tremendous ceramic tradition that supports it. *Tradition Transformed* demonstrates how traditional techniques are forged with contemporary influences to express new ideas.

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About the Curator

Ms. Cho, Chung Hyun, a ceramic artist, retired professor of ceramic art, and former dean of the College of Art and Design, Ewha Womans University in Seoul, Korea is curator of the exhibition. Her ceramic work is inspired by the naturalness of the Korean *onggi* method, which she incorporates into her clay work. Her works are in major museums such as the National Museum of Modern Art, Seoul; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Korea; the Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena, California; the Victoria and Albert Museum, United Kingdom; and the Musée Royal de Mariemont, Morlanwelz, Belgium.

Tradition Transformed was made possible by the generous support of The Korea Foundation, Seoul, with additional support from Han, Hyang Lim Gallery and Jay Lee Collection, Seoul. Additional support for educational programming is provided by the Korean Craft Promotional Foundation, Seoul. A fully illustrated exhibition catalogue accompanies the exhibition.



Kim, Jin Kyoung, *Rose*, 2006

Exhibition Specifications

Number of Works:

87 works by 29 artists

Curator:

Ms. Cho, Chung Hyun, ceramic artist and retired professor, Department of Ceramics, College of Art, Ewha Womans University, Seoul, Korea

Organized by:

International Arts & Artists

Shipping:

IA&A makes all arrangements, venues pay outgoing shipping

Publications:

Exhibition catalogue

Requirements:

Moderate security; approximately 3000 square feet (280 square meters); venues provide exhibition furniture

Bookings:

Ormeau Baths Gallery, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Belfast

Crafts Council of Ireland, Kilkenny, Ireland

Taller Escuela de Cerámica de Muel, Zaragoza, Spain

Museo Nacional de la Cerámica y Artes Suntuarias González Martí, Valencia, Spain

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England

Availability:

September 2008 - December 2011

Participation Fee:

8,000 plus outgoing shipping

Contact:

Margalit Monroe
margalitm@artsandartists.org

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An, Sung Min (b. 1969)

A simple cylinder has been transformed into an array of rhythmic shapes. In general, the work is an experiment on form based on the notion of containing and holding in ceramics, as vessels are significant for carrying different substances.

Right: *Variety*, 2003



Choi, Bong Su (b. 1953)

Choi's work concentrates on the plasticity of different clay bodies. Over time, phenomenal events have exposed the clay's inherent nature. Most of his work is a depiction of these daily objects and living organisms resulting in a unique expression of art.

Right: *An Old Memory of Mine 3*, 2006



Choi, Suk Jin (b. 1960)

Choi applies the inlaying technique of the Koryo Period (918 - 1391 AD) to her works. This piece is about the accumulation of information and knowledge through time and space. Like the surface of rusted metal, the trace of time seeps into the veins of human beings. Through the clay work, the artist escapes the present to travel into the past searching to recollect different memories and images.

Right: *Germination*, n.d.



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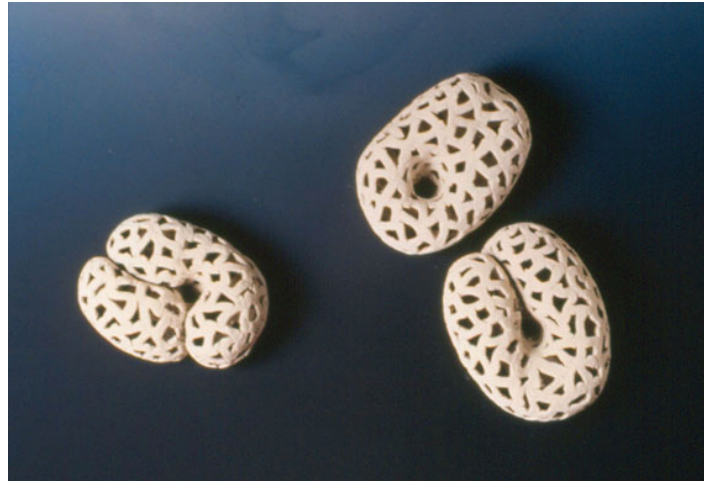
Contemporary Korean Ceramics



Guac, Roh Hoon (b. 1959)

Guac believes the essence of anything is important. He expresses this in his pieces through the lightness of clay, and by using the netting technique. Each structure is made with small coils. They are flattened and assembled together in gradual stages. Patience and hard work is evident in the delicately netted structures.

Right: *Form-Series III*, 2006



Han, Gil Hong (b. 1944)

Han's work fundamentally expresses the Buddhist philosophy on rebirth and reincarnation. He emphasizes the fact that our bodies return to earth once we die. Each piece is titled *Transmigration*, signifying that the completion of one work is one life and because clay can be re-used when it is not fired, this process can be compared to rebirth.

Right: *Transmigration-0543*, 2005



Han, Hyang Lim (b. 1956)

Han selects mountains as her subject reflecting the landscape of Korea where 70 percent of the land is mountain ranges. From the mountaintops to snow covered plains, the spectator is able to catch a glimpse of the natural environment of Korea through these ceramic pieces. Here one is able to imagine the winter season in Korea.

Right: *Snow-covered Winter Mountain*, 2003



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Han, Young Sil (b. 1959)

The work is mainly about freeing the soul. Much of the artist's subject concentrates on the hidden spirit and the search for its liberation. The words positive and negative have been combined to form the word *ponetive*. The term refers to the notion of co-existing and relates to the yin and yang philosophy.

Right: *Ponetive Figure I*, 2006



Hong, Soon Jung (b. 1968)

Hong's work is an expression of the leaf form of flowers, plants and trees. Leaves and petals are made by pressing clay into different plaster molds. Once the leaf shapes are press-molded, they are assembled together. The work is high fired and decorated in different color slips and glazes.

Right: *A Heap of Petals*, 2006



Joo, Ji Wan (b. 1965)

Joo's work employs the traditional technique of inlaying from the Koryo Period (918 - 1391 AD) combined with contemporary geometric shapes. Her work demonstrates the successful union of using older methods with contemporary forms.

Right: *Wishing for the Future II*, 2004



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Jung, Yoo Kun (b. 1952)

Jung's work addresses past rites and material culture. Due to the rapid development of technology, Koreans have less appreciation for the significance of objects of the past. This piece is also about giving attention and respect to Korean ancestors.

Right: *Seat of Spirit – Silver Knife*, 2006



Kang, Suk Young (b. 1949)

Kang uses the shadows of the white forms to change the character of his work. Much of the work is about volume and light, expanding the technical grounds in ceramics. He is among a pioneering group of artists who create their work by using the slip-casting technique in ceramics.

Right: *Untitled*, 2002



Kim, Dae Hoon (b. 1957)

Kim's work is about combining naturalism with minimal expressions. The work varies depending on the artist's state of mind yet the main core of the work concerns time and space. The pieces have been made with large sheets of clay. They are treated as surfaces for depicting different memories.

Right: *Outsider Art I*, 2006



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Kim, Eun Me (b. 1955)

The technique of drain casting slip made from a mixture of porcelain clay and applying refractory brick powder. For the reddish jar, patterns are created with decals. The work undergoes several firings to achieve the deep reddish tone. Then the final pattern is added by applying dotted decal patterns.

Right: *Flat Jar*, 2006



Kim, Hyun Sik (b. 1958)

The artist is inspired by nature. The works are a metaphorical expression of life. The focus on organic shapes and soft lines attempt to capture nature in motion. The work depicts the continued process of giving birth to new life.

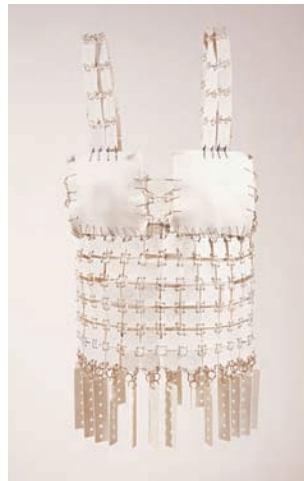
Right: *Life I*, 2006



Kim, Jin Kyoung (b. 1968)

The costume is woven porcelain, which has been slip cast and then each small shard is threaded with wire. Each piece is like the cast-off skin of an individual, making a statement on the human body and at the same time symbolizing both body and spirit.

Right: *Netting Clay II*, 2004



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Kim, Jong Hyun (b. 1954)

Kim's work expresses his ideas on the dualism of human beings. People may state one thing but in actuality they may be suggesting something else. Made with clay slabs in combination with the coiling technique, the surface is treated with salt water, oxides and black glaze. Symmetry in the form signifies the tranquil state of the human mind.

Right: *WORK-20050711*, 2005



Kwon, Shin (b. 1947)

Kwon's work has been made with slabs of clay assembled to create a consolidated form with volume. The compiling of the slabs requires order and discipline. To avoid the heaviness of the form, certain areas have been hollowed out. His work depicts delicate nest shapes.

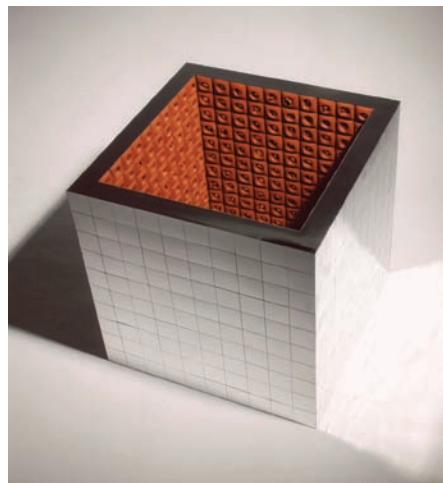
Right: *Bird's Eggs*, 2000



Lee, Eun Mee (b. 1967)

The artist has assembled numerous units made of clay inside a cube. There are 500 units and although they may appear the same, each one is individual. The circular marks have been made with a wooden stick and the impressions are all different. They are holding the artist's movement (energy) and time.

Right: *Holding the Moment*, 2005



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Lee, Kang Hyo (b. 1961)

The inspiration for the work comes from traditional Korean houses referred to as *hanok*. A home gives people comfort and should be a peaceful space as well as place for meeting people: guests, friends, family. The work relates to the artist's life and art, as the studio is located within the living quarters in a regional area of Korea.

Right: *My House III*, 2006



Lee, Myung Soon (b. 1954)

Lee sees the aesthetics of "angels" as the human aspiration to be freed from the limitations of time and space on Earth. The work depicts the image of dancing angels and signifies the combining of the angel and the human spirit.

Right: *Aesthetics of Angels - C*, 2006



Lee, Soo Jong (b. 1948)

Lee is renowned for using the slip-brushing method of the *buncheong* ware from the Joseon Period. The marks on the vessels are calligraphic expressions similar to Korean scrolls. For this method placing, space and spontaneity are essential.

Right: *Buncheong Jar with Korean Calligraphy in Iron Oxide Surface*, 2006



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Lim, Moo Keun (b. 1941)

Lim incorporates his Christian beliefs in his work. Often the work incorporates a large granite-like base stone, symbolizing Jesus with several small pebbles as Jesus's followers. This piece references, "I am the vine; and you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

Right: *Oh, How Beautiful It Is to Live Together*, 2006



Oh, Chun Hak (b. 1948 - d. 2005)

Oh controls the fluidity in the plastic nature of clay. Here, circular forms are used to create different curves. The mental and emotional subjective viewpoints are based on circular forms employing movement and rhythm.

Right: *Work 2005-10*, 2005



Park, Kyoung Soon (b. 1953)

Park's work signifies prayer through the simplified expression of a bird form placed on top of a Korean pole called *sotdae*. The surface was treated using the *buncheong* technique from the Joseon Period (1392-1910).

Right: *Bird*, 2004



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Park, Nae Heon (b. 1959)

Park originally trained as a fine art painter. The vessels are made by paddling, similar to the technique used for making Korean food storage jars. Most of the themes relate to Korea's natural conditions such as mountains, rivers, lakes in relation to certain symbolisms.

Right: *Landscape with Birds*, 2006



Ro, Hae Sin (b. 1965)

Ro attempts to create a reciprocal relationship between form and color. Different colors possess varying characteristics, insinuating movement, weight and atmosphere. Furthermore, colors bring out inner sensitivity and appreciation of beauty.

Right: *From Cylinder*, 2006



Roe, Kyung Joe (b. 1951)

Roe is interested in the human spirit in correlation to the flow of time. Similar to a small patch, we are all pieces that fit into the puzzle of history. The pieces of the puzzle are expressed in his marbling technique.

Right: *Diary*, 1999



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Ryu, Nam Hee (b. 1957)

The work symbolizes life, nature and emotion. The composition relates with the consistent use of discipline, primitive formations and extinction, in addition to a balance resulting from dissemination and acceptance. Ryu strives for immaculateness in his forming technique.

Right: *Life-delight 2006-03*, 2006



Won, Il An (b. 1958)

The work is a hypothetical space signifying a journey – travel and life's journey. This piece compares the real and ideal world. The shadow created by light depicts the dual nature of reality. They combine into one as a method of unifying the complex self.

Right: *Shadow 2006*, 2006



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Cho, Chung Hyun

Retired professor and former Dean, Department of Ceramics, College of Art and Design, Ewha Womans University, Seoul, Korea

Education

- 1976 Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville M.F.A
- 1966 Ewha Womans University M.A.
- 1963 Ewha Womans University B.A.

Solo Exhibitions

- 2001 Galerij Pikwardreat, Dorpsstraat, Belgium
- 2000 Jacop Jordacns Art Center, Antwerpen, Belgium
- 1997 Gallery Chie Bark, Osaka, Japan: Inlaid Onggi '97
- 1996 Boolil Gallery, Seoul, Korea: Inlaid Jil gu rut
- 1994 Moyer Arts and Craft Gallery, Seoul, Korea: Inlaid Jil gu rut'94
- 1992 Shinsegae Gallery, Seoul, Korea: Inlaid Jil gu rut
- 1986 Pro-Art Gallery, St. Louis, Missouri
- 1982 Craft Alliance Gallery, St. Louis, Missouri
- 1982 American Cultural Center Gallery, Seoul, Korea
- 1981 Pewabic Pottery Gallery, Detroit, Michigan

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2001 *Korean Ceramics*, The North Bohemian Museum, Czech Republic
- 2001 *Korean Event*, The British Museum, London, UK
- 2000 *Breaking The Surface: Contemporary Korean Ceramics*, Ivy Wu Gallery, National Museum of Scotland, UK
- 1999 *Hedendaagse Koreaanse Kunst*, Jacop Jordaens Art Center, Belgium
- 1997 *15 Contemporary Korean Clay, Metal & Fiber Art*, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona, USA
- 1995 *Work selected for 50 Contemporary Ceramics*, Seoul Gallery, Seoul, Korea
- 1994 *Work selected for Thirty Years of Korean Contemporary Ceramics* (National Museum of Contemporary Art)
- 1993 *A Contemporary Japan Korean Crafts Exhibition* (Osaka, Kyoto, Japan)
- 1993 *Work selected for Contemporary Korean Ceramics* by Circolodegli Artisti Faenza (Faenza, Italia)
- 1993 *Work selected for Contemporary Korean Ceramics* by the NCECA (San Diego, USA)
- 1993 *Work selected for the Special Exhibition for the Opening Show* (Seoul Art Center)
- 1991-1995 *Seoul Craft Exhibition* (Seoul Metropolitan Museum of Art) Awards
- 1996 *Mokyang Crafts Award*, Korean Crafts Association, Korea
- 1990 Literary Prize, the Ministry of Science and Technology, Architectural Ceramic Patterns Found in the Traditional Korean Houses the Han-Ok, Korea

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1989 *First Honor Ceramic Award*, Korean Crafts Association, Korea
1969 *The Prime Ministers Award*, The Exhibition of Korean Art, Korea

Public collections

The National Museum of Modern Art, Seoul, KOREA
Seoul Metropolitan Museum of Arts, Seoul, KOREA
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England, UNITED KINGDOM
British Museum, London, England, UNITED KINGDOM
Muse Royal De Mariemont, Morlanwelz, BELGIUM
Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Ontario, CANADA
Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena, California, USA
National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland, UNITED KINGDOM
Kunsthistorisches Museum mit MVK und OTM, Wien, Austria

Publications

The Traditional Onggi Wares of Korea, Chung Hyun Cho, Ewha Womans University Publications, 1997
The Past and Present of Korean Contemporary Ceramic Art, Chung-Hyun Cho, *Thirty Years of Contemporary Korean Ceramics*, The National Contemporary Art Museum of Korea, 1994, pp. 105-151
A Contemporary Artist, Byoung-Kwan Chung, *Art and Crafts* magazine, Design House Publications, 1993, pp. 8-13
The Structure of Floral Wall Patterns, Chung-Hyun Cho, *Arts and Crafts*, The History of Arts and Crafts, 1992
The Past and Present of American Architectural Ceramics, Chung-Hyun Cho, *Ceramics* magazine, Ceramics Publications, 1991, pp. 222-231
Patterns and Architectural Ceramics of the Han-Ok (Traditional Korean House), Chung-Hyun Cho, Gi-Mun Publications, 1990
Floral Walls, Chung-Hyun Cho, Dae-Won Publications, 1989
The Different Forms of the Korean Earthenware and Porcelain, Chung-Hyun Cho, An Ewha Womans University Thesis, Ewha Womans University Publication Department, pp.383-414
A Study on Korean Environmental Ceramics, Chung-Hyun Cho, An Ewha Womans University Thesis, Ewha Womans University, Publication Department